

Background

A current practice issue in nursing is whether to use disposable chlorhexidine wipes to bathe patients or the traditional method of a basin, soap, water, and washcloths. Hygiene is an essential portion of nursing care; a bed bath is a technique used in practice when the patient is bound to their bed due to their limited function from a condition. The traditional basin bath and bag bath are two common ways used in the hospital setting for ill patients unable to care for their own needs. The key factors regarding the importance of bathing techniques include skin integrity and reducing infection risk, especially in the hospital due to the abundance of bacteria. Promoting hygiene and comfort help to reduce these factors.

Purpose

The purpose of this quality improvement project was to educate nurses and patients on the benefits of bathing with chlorhexidine wipes compared to traditional bathing with soap and water. The implementation goal is to improve patient outcomes with the reduction of infection and increased compliance with bathing with disposable chlorhexidine wipes.

Literature Review

Based on a literature review of 20 research studies, a reduction in infectious organisms was found when using disposable wipes rather than the traditional method. Using disposable chlorhexidine wipes is cost-effective because less money will be spent treating infections that could have been prevented with wipes. It was also found that both nurses and patients prefer the disposable wipes compared to the traditional bed bath. Chlorhexidine wipes were shown to be more time effective allowing nurses more time to provide other nursing interventions. There were no negative effects of using disposable bed baths instead of doing traditional bed baths. In one of the studies reviewed, it was stated "There was an 8% increase in chlorhexidine bathing compliance and a 22% decrease in refusal for the week that visual reminders were posted throughout the halls, along with informational pamphlets given to each patient about the benefits of chlorhexidine bathing" (Dominguez, 2016). Increased compliance results in less incidence of infection and better patient outcomes. One study showed that a quality improvement measure of bathing with disposable wipes implemented throughout the entire hospital stay resulted in increased cost-effectiveness and increased health care worker productivity.

Clinical Implications

Hospital staff nurses will be provided with an informational brochure explaining the benefits of chlorhexidine bathing wipes to be used as a patient educational tool. All patients will be given the informational brochure on admission explaining the benefits of chlorhexidine bathing wipes. Staff nurses will be available to answer any questions or concerns patients may have about bed bathing techniques.

Chlorhexidine Bathing Wipes vs. Traditional Bed Bath

Bathing is an essential part of nursing care because it directly influences the patient's wellbeing and physiologic status. Recent studies have shown that chlorhexidine bathing is superior to traditional bed baths.

COMPARED TO TRADITIONAL BED BATHING, CHLORHEXIDINE WIPES HAVE BEEN PROVEN TO:

**SAVE NURSES TIME
REDUCE INFECTION
REDUCE SKIN BREAKDOWN
SAVE HOSPITALS MONEY**

Chlorhexidine Bathing Wipes



vs.

Traditional Bed Bath



✓ SAVE NURSES TIME
Chlorhexidine bathing wipes are designed to save time. The prepackaged chlorhexidine impregnated wipes are designed to be warmed and used one wipe per extremity. One study found that only 17% of traditional wash basin baths were completed in under a ten minute time frame, while 82% of the disposable bed baths were completed within the ten minute time frame (Herdan, B., Brandson, R. V., Prandson, T. K., Bing, A., Stuhang, H. N., & Petersen, K., 2017).

✓ REDUCE INFECTION
Chlorhexidine wipes are 4.8 times more effective to decrease the inpatient skin microbial load when compared with the conventional bed bath (Cristina Paula, D., Mangini Bocchi, S. ta C., Lia Mondelli, A., Cuadrado Martin, L., & Sobrinho, A. R., 2018). Also, bathing basins can be a fomite for infection. Using chlorhexidine bathing wipes eliminates the need of using a bath basin that may harbor infectious bacteria.

✓ REDUCE SKIN BREAKDOWN
Traditional bathing requires using towels and washcloths that can be damaging to already compromised skin integrity. In a study, Skin integrity deterioration was significantly less among patients bathed with prepackaged washcloths (Martin, E., Halder, S., Palleschi, M., Eagle, S., Crisostomo, D., Haddock, P., Harmon, L., Manur, R., and Moshon, J., 2017).

✓ SAVE HOSPITALS MONEY
Chlorhexidine impregnated wipes are more cost effective than traditional bed bathing because they reduce infection rates.



Bathing Techniques/Supplies

Chlorhexidine Wipes



VS.

Traditional Bed Bath



References

Dominguez, M. R. (2016) Chlorhexidine Gluconate Bathing in Hospitalized Patients: Reducing Barriers and Increasing Compliance Rate. *Master's Projects and Capstones*. 415. <https://repository.usfca.edu/capstone/415>

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